GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:640
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009
OVERLAPPING WORK OF PANCHAYATI RAJ MINISTRY
Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether multiple agencies have been entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the anti-poverty programmes, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Rural Health Mission and National Horticulture Mission, which actually fall within the ambit of Panchayati Raj, which in turn has undermined the role of Panchayats;

(b) whether the Government proposes to merge all the above schemes into one to be entrusted to the Panchayati Raj for their better implementation;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a): Guidelines for implementation of anti-poverty programmes, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Rural Health Mission and National Horticulture Mission are issued by respective Central Ministries and are followed by orders issued by the State Governments. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been actively pursuing the matter of according centrality to Panchayats in planning, implementation and monitoring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, including the flagship schemes, with respective Central Ministries.

Anti-poverty programmes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) are being implemented through the Panchayats. Under the provisions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), eligible households apply to the Gram Panchayat which, after due verification, issues the job card. Each district has to prepare a shelf of projects, which is done on the basis of priority assigned by the Gram Sabha. At least 50% of the works have to be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution. Social audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha. Similarly, under the Indira Awas Yojana, Panchayats ensure that selection of beneficiaries is according to the prescribed criteria. Panchayats are responsible for stage wise payments to the beneficiaries.

In the case of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District level and Block level core teams inter- alia with representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions have been formed to implement and supervise the activities under the Abhiyan at the respective levels. At the village level, Village Education Committees (VECs) implement the programme. It has been decided that the VEC would function under the overall supervision and control of the Standing Committee on Education under Gram Panchayat. State Governments are to ensure that all tiers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are given roles of supervision over the elementary education programmes/ SSA.

Under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) guidelines, planning and implementation of the programme is mandated through Panchayats. The District Health Mission, which guides and manages all public health institutions in the district, sub-centers, Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs), is headed by the President of the Zilla Parishad. The Village Health and Sanitation Committee (VHSC) that is a sub-committee of the Gram Panchayat is responsible for village health planning. Likewise, Panchayats are involved in the supervision of Sub Health Centers and PHCs.

The National Horticulture Mission is implemented to provide holistic growth of agriculture sector covering fruits, vegetables, roots and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants and plantation crops by adopting area based differentiated strategies which includes research, technology promotion, extension, post harvest management, processing and marketing, in consonance with comparative advantage of the State/region and its diverse agro-climatic feature. Under the scheme guidelines, at the district level, Panchayat members and the District Planning Committee will be involved in implementing the programme depending on their expertise and available infrastructure.

(b): There is no proposal to merge all the above schemes into one to be entrusted to the Panchayati Raj at present. Each scheme is designed to serve its specific objective, but it is expected that the centrality of the Panchayats in each of such schemes is progressively ensured.

(c): Does not arise.

(d): Assigning the functions with regard to planning, implementation and monitoring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes to Panchayats is a continuous process. It has been the endeavor of the government to assign centrality to Panchayats in the planning, implementation

and monitoring of developmental programmes/schemes. Activity Mapping Matrices delineating functions to be assigned to each tier of Panchayats have been drawn for each of the above- mentioned schemes by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Respective line Ministries have been requested to issue necessary guidelines to the States to follow these activity mappings in the implementation of the programmes/schemes.